Continued from Preceding Page.

natives are frankly, emphatically unclothed, unsophisticated savages, with many of the repulsive qualities of that not always overclean "state of nature." Yet he manages to cast an enduring glamour over them. One feels a real friendliness toward his fat old king, toward the crafty "prime minister" and the assortment of kindly, human, brown men and women. The narrator even succeeds in persuading one that some of the women may be as lovable as he makes them.

That last point, indeed, is the main theme of the book. The mechanism of it is elaborate and handled with great skill—so skillfully that one cannot be quite sure that his Dutchman, Van Zanten, whose memoir the tale purports to be, is entirely mythical. The form of it is intended to create a belief in his actuality; it succeeds, at least to the extent of giving Van Zanten remarkable solidity and concreteness in effect. He is supposed to be a young Dutchman who has broken away from official life at Batavia and taken up existence as a native, living exactly as the natives do, upon an unnamed isle, which is only located as being somewhere not too far from Yap. Much of the narrative is taken up with incidental descriptions of such native life, fishing, cultivating the *taro*, interviews with the king, samples of witchcraft, &c. But it all leads to the love affair with Ali, the king's young daughter, whom Van Zanten finally acquires as his wife. As a primitive, elemental love story it is immensely effective. It is naturally sensuous to the extreme, but its very frankness and direct simplicity keep it entirely wholesome and without the repulsive quality of the soul-sensuality of the civilized decadent. There is, in fact, nothing unclean about it.

But it is rather hard to follow Van Zanten in his assertion that the "so-called savage woman is both physically and morally far superior to the civilized European woman, or at any rate to her representatives in 'society.'" That is just a bit too primitive to be quite convincing. He tells us that these "mild and noble women" have a "glance that is more daring than that of any European woman, but nevertheless strangely chaste, clean, innocent. . . . There is no flippancy, no giggling, no secret sensuality. Proud of their own natural tendencies, they take and give without reservation, without shame."

After several happy years of such primitive felicity Van Zanten's household, his wife and baby, are wiped out by a typhoon that wrecks most of the island. He goes back to Europe and ends his days, an aimless, broken hearted wanderer. The book is a striking performance both in conception and in detail; it whets one's appetite for more of the work of Laurid Bruun in an English dress.

PEEWEE. By William MacHarg. Chicago: Reilly & Lee Company.

IT is difficult to appraise such a novel as this fairly. Under a highly improbable though conventional plot of a melodramatic type the story has a genuinely moving situation, unusual in conception and truly poignant in its appeal to "pity, compassion and the source of tears." Mr. MacHarg's manner of handling it is a little hard, tending to sharp, metallic lines where more subtly managed lights and shades are needed. Nor is one always convinced that his psychology is accurate in its interpretation of the emotions of an eight year old boy. But, with these limitations stated, he nevertheless makes his point, broadly, though the solution of the problems presented dwindles off into a somewhat sentimentalized, conventional ending.

There is no more hazardous undertaking for the novelist than the attempt to present a real child's soul and to analyze the motives behind what a child actually does. The commonest slips are toward making the boy merely an undersized grownup, a miniature man in knickerbockers, or toward a mushy sentimentalism and the dreary pathos of the weeping Dickens, of whom Don Marquis sang:

"But where are the stones that Dickens shied
When he had treed a child?"

Mr. MacHarg pretty successfully avoids each of these pitfalls. His Peewee is sometimes dangerously mature in his reasoning, but it will not do to call that impossible in the case of a gutter bred boy who has fended for himself since his third or fourth year, in and out of "institutions," selling newspapers and living the life of the city slums. The amount of sophistication and experience attainable by such an eight year old may be appalling, without making a monster of him. The unspoiled, essential child may live on under the grime.

It is also true that a boy of that age may feel a wonderful, passionate devotion toward a mature woman—something different from love toward a mother, being rather an idealization of beauty, an inarticulate worship, that is neither sexual nor filial in its root, but rather æsthetic and intellectual, though highly charged with emotion. It is a form of devotion not at all rare, though rarely understood, and still more rarely adequately portrayed. It is this kind of devotion that Peewee displays toward the beautiful lady who crosses his path; and that she afterward turns out to be, in fact, his mother, is a rather cheapening concession to conventional romance.

The central theme of the plot is that when Peewee finds himself involved in an investigation of his dubious parentage and learns that if the lovely lady hears the truth about him it would "spoil her life," he heroically runs away to save her suffering. Through it all Mr. MacHarg does succeed in keeping him a real child, though he runs perilously near to slopping over sometimes. The handling is successful enough to give the book an unusual appeal.

THE SCHOOLMASTER AND OTHER STORIES. By Anton Chekhov. The Macmillan Company.

IT is a real service to literature to have made Chekhov accessible to the American public in an adequate translation. Constance Garnett seems to have caught the author's keynote. Her translation is as spirited as an original work, and yet essentially faithful to the author. Chekhov's modesty made him believe that his work would not live long. The public of Russia and the world have shown that he was mistaken. His unusual insight into character and his varied powers of description have seldom been equaled. He is *sui generis*, and it is difficult to find any one to whom he can be compared. It can perhaps be said that the method of treatment is that of De Maupassant, and that his subject matter, the foibles and oddities of the race, is alien to the material of Dickens. The opening story of the volume, "The Schoolmaster," is as kindly and sympathetic as "The Christmas Carol." On the other hand, the story "In the Courtyard" might almost have been written by De Maupassant. It reminds the reader of the French author's story of "The Piece of String."

The temperamental Russian is supposed to be at the opposite pole from the cool, matter of fact American. However, Chekhov is such a universal genius that many of his tales furnish parallels to the masterpieces of American literature. Chekhov's formless method of writing differs diametrically to O. Henry's elaborate technique, and yet "The Examining Magistrate" has O. Henry's trick of the unexpected ending. "In the Graveyard" is a tale of horror which only Edgar Allan Poe could have duplicated. The reader is reminded of Mark Twain's drastic methods in dealing with agents when he reads Chekhov's story of the author who murdered a lady for wasting his time by reading a worthless play to him.

The Book Factory

By EDWARD ANTHONY.

A REAL NOVEL.

(*"Vandemark's Folly," by Herbert Quick.*)

Jacobus Teunis Vandemark
(A nice iambic name)
Worked on an old canalling ark,
And found the life too tame.

"Horatio Canalger may
Show how canal boys grow
Immensely rich, but let me say
He wasn't in the know,"

Said Jacob as he quit his job
And beat it for the West
To join the pioneering mob
In their adventurous quest.

With teams of bovines (what a whim!)
He sallied forth one day.
"Cow-do!" the mockers greeted him,
But not to Jake's dismay.

On, on he resolutely pressed,
Unruffled as could be;
He knew the lowly cows possessed
Kinetic energee—

And that since steady was their gait
(They hardly ever stopped),
He'd reach far I-o-way, the State
He wanted to adopt.

Arriving at old I-o-way
(This was long years ago),
He sang no joyous roundelay—
His land was under *cau!*

Yes, there were pools and seas and lakes
Of water on the plot,
Which naturally dampened Jake's
Enthusiasm a lot.

One piece was dry. And Jake expressed
His purpose thusly, "I
Will plow the good and hang the rest
Upon the line to dry."

And soon he had as nice a place
As any one could wish;
And things were growing in the space
Where formerly were fish.

And then (this I cannot ignore)—
He won Virginia, whom
He rescued many days before
From, say, impending doom.

In winning her Jacobus had
No faith in prayer and hope;
It counted more to fasten bad
Buck Gowdy with a rope.

I've left out eighty-seven things
That give the volume zest—
Jake's colorful adventurings,
Rowena—and the rest.

For if I told you in this chat
The story through and through,
You wouldn't buy the book and that
Would never, never do!

* * *

COMPLAINT DEPT.

Sir: There are some sentences in "Cytherea" that make me want to box Hergesheimer's ears. Here is one of 'em (page 65): "He didn't especially like Willard, a man with an exuberant loud friendliness, a good nature, that served a cover for a facilely predatory sensuality."

To me that sounds like a pretentious way of saying something that could have been said simply.

—NOAH KOWNT.

* * *

THE BROMIDE FACTORY.

If writers had business cards, Louis Plante, author of "The Shadow of the Astral," described as "a mystic narrative," could, with no little appropriateness, have his read like this:

LOUIS PLANTE.
Manufacturer of Bromides
Commonplaces of All Periods,
Including the Platitudor
INSPECT OUR PLANTE
Mediocritea Served

Louis's book is so full of platitudes it gave us a headache that even a dollar's worth of bromide seltzer failed to cure.

Here are some of the gentleman's thoughts, and lest, by the power of his reasoning, he convert you to his philosophy of bromidealism, we urge you, before you read them (and don't forget that Cæsar would have done well to listen to the soothsayer) to beware the bromides of March. And now that we have warned you, here they are:

"You know not in this, your hour of agony, of the great joy that in the future awaits you!"

"Every man has a call for some kind of work."

"Coming into consciousness through some blind force, we live our little day and suffer a thousand hours of pain to one of pleasure. Afar off the Fates and Furies watch our feeble efforts in ghoulish glee and mock us with their hollow laughter."

"Then suddenly the great truth flashed on his consciousness that Good was absolute and eternal, while Evil was relative and transitory."

"The friendly stars were his mute companions."

"There is a law of harmony that brings kindred souls together in union."

"I have made a resolution to lay my mind open to truth, from whatever source it comes."

"For all truth, he told them, has two aspects or two sides."

"The cause of human suffering is the idea each man cherishes in his heart that he is better than his brother."

"No philosopher, however great, has known all of the truth."

"While his body was old his mind was young."

"What a future is thine, O man!"

"My thirst for knowledge has been insatiable; but up to a very recent time I took my draughts from the fountains of Authority; now I have come to believe that truth can be perceived by the pure soul as easily as light by the physical eye."

* * *

But we found an even better passage—and we thank Mr. Plante for naming his character so appropriately—on Page 141. Here it is: "ANTHONY'S sufferings became keener than ever." (*They did.*)

Another great truth appears on Page 47: "ANTHONY closed the volume and fell into a deep reverie. He continued to muse until sleep overcame him." (*It might be added that we slept for ten hours.*)

* * *

CONTINUING OUR OWN POETRY COURSE.

VI.

Dactyls begin with a syllable stressed,
Then there's a couple of light ones:
Bang and then easy twice. . . .
As for the rest,
Study these deucedly bright ones!

VII.

To state it minus any fuss,
A triplet is a couplet plus
A line. (This sample ain't so wuss.)

VIII.

Vers libre
Is anything
At all,
Arranged
Like this.

* * *

"DOT'S NODDINGS," LEW FIELDS WOULD SAY.

Some . . . books . . . a r e . . . too . . . darned . . . dotty. Others aren't sufficiently speckled, as, for instance, Walter de la Mare's "Memoirs of a Midget," in which the author tells, among others, of St Rosa, Mrs. Percy Maudlen, Mr. Clodd and Dr. Grose.

Maybe the idea is that since the story is written around an abbreviated heroine it would be consonant with the spirit of the tale to abbreviate the abbreviations by leaving off the dots.

Having said which, we'd be a mean guy not to add that "Memoirs of a Midget" is easily one of the best books of the year.

* * *

PALAVER.

Said Moon-calf Floyd to Ethel M.
"Dellebrities is what we be."
Said Ethel M. with an *ahem*,
"Yeah, *Delles lettres* is our specialtee."

* * *

BOY, PAGE CHARLES G. NORRIS.

"But you musn't forget the chance of catching a gold ring," he reminded her.

"It's brass," Mrs. Craddock asserted.—**From "Cytherea."**

* * *

In "Cytherea" Mr. Hergesheimer is as fond of the word "rococo" as ever. These couplets will tell you how to pronounce it:

I had to tell her she was loco
For giving me that tie rococo.
The book was bound in mauve morocco,
A spectacle I thought rococo.

* * *

As soon as we get a chance to write an answer to it we are going to print a sprightly quatrain Jim Quigney, the Book Section's able utility man, has sent us.

* * *

Some books we read through. Others we give what might be called—(and you'd agree on the fitness of the term if you could hear some of the things we say)——

* * *

A cursory examination.